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YEAH. RIGHT.
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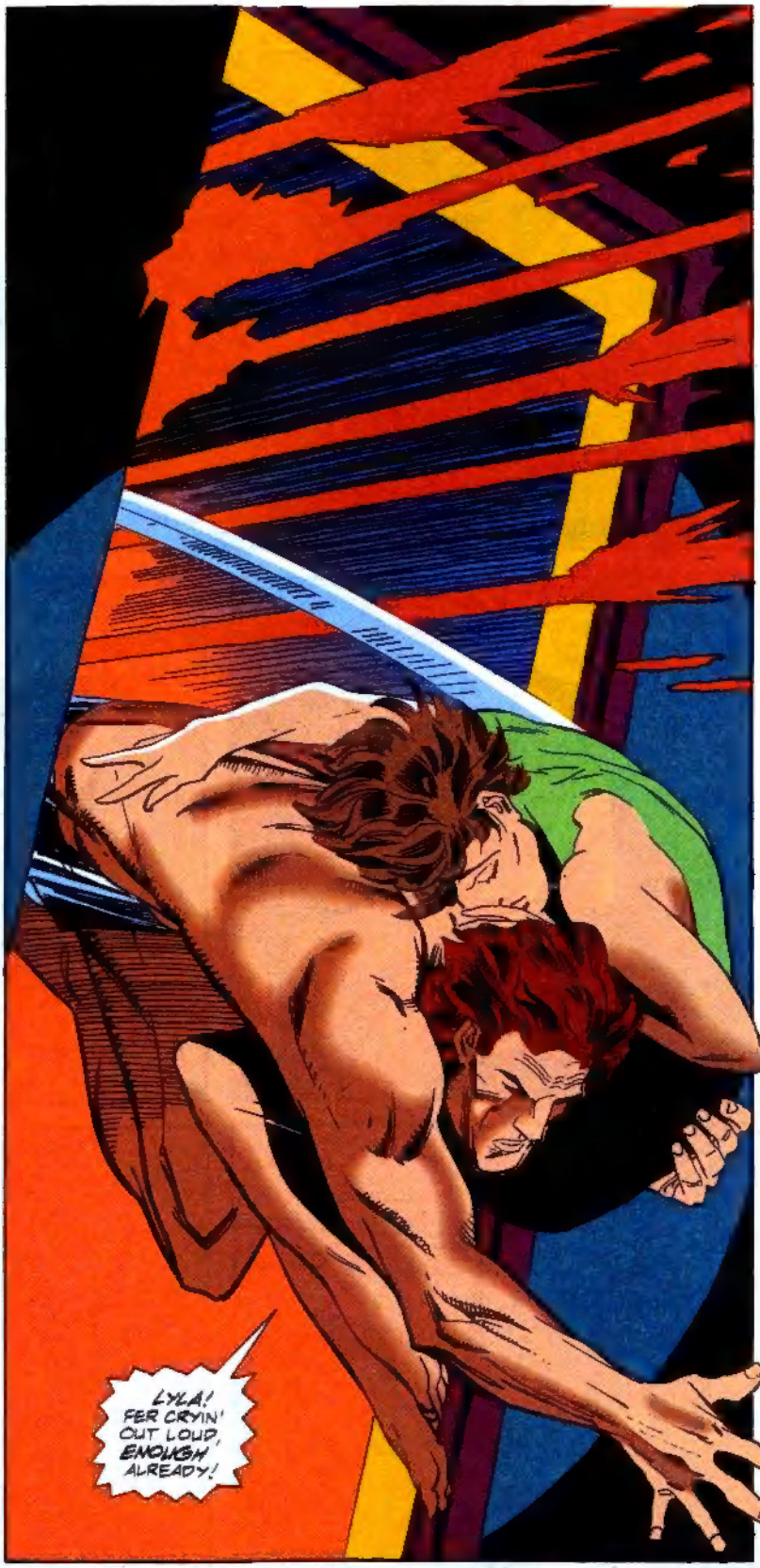
STAN LEE PRESENTS:

MELTDOWN



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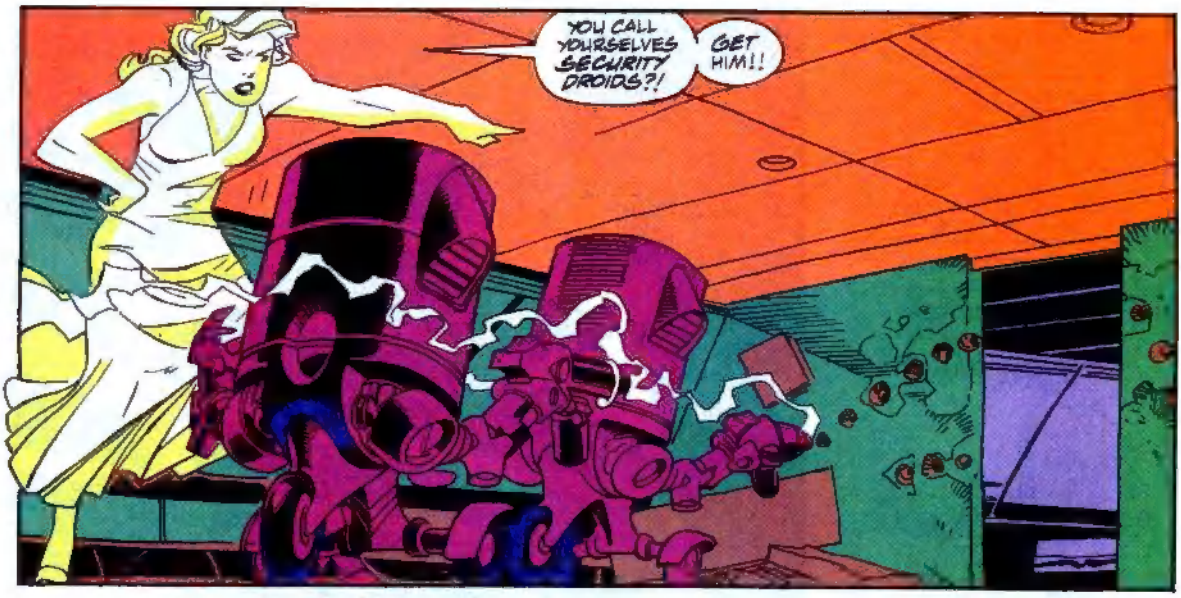

YOU CALL YOURSELVES SECURITY DROIDS?!
GET HIM!!

I DON'T BELIEVE THIS. TWICE IN TWO MONTHS I'M GONNA HAVE TO LEAVE THROUGH MY BEDROOM WINDOW.
MAYBE I SHOULD JUST PUT IN ANOTHER DOOR THERE.

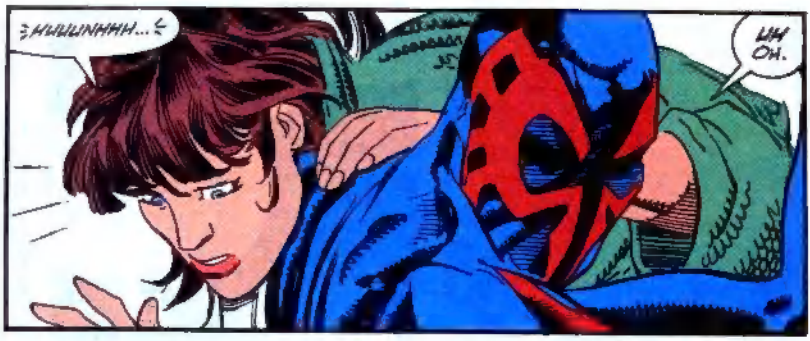
UHM... MIGUEL...?
JUST HOW LONG DO YOU THINK A BED... EVEN A WEBBED UP ONE...

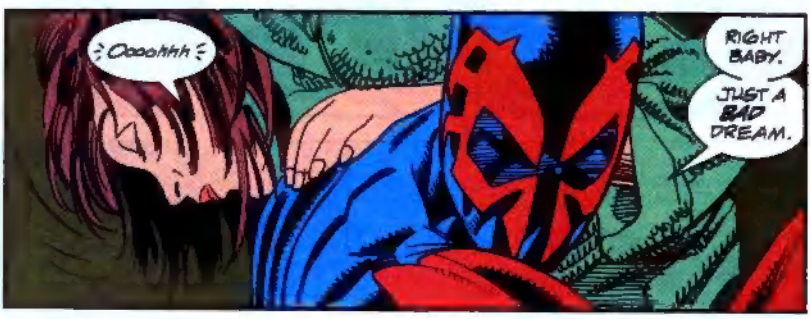
...IS GOING TO HOLD THEM OFF?
BY THE WAY, REDECORATING WITHOUT INFORMING THE LANDLORD IS A VIOLATION OF--
FWIZZ

WHEN I GET MY HANDS ON YOUR PROGRAMMERS, I'LL STRANGLE THEM.

THREATS, MIGUEL? IS THAT WHAT WE'VE SUNK TO? THREATS? AFTER WHAT I'VE TRIED TO DO FOR YOU?
I'M NOT LISTENING TO THIS.
YOU'RE MELTED, LYLA. YOU'RE COMPLETELY OUT OF WHACK AND OUT OF CONTROL.
I DON'T KNOW... MAYBE I SET THIS OFF SOMEHOW, TRYING TO GET YOU TO "THINK." GABE'S THE COMPUTER WHIZ, NOT ME.
IF I AM RESPONSIBLE, I APOLOGIZE. BUT I CAN'T HANG AROUND HERE WAITING FOR YOU TO GET YOUR MICROBRAIN TOGETHER. IT'S TOO DANGEROUS.
BE SURE TO THANK THE DROIDS FOR BLASTING HOLES IN MY WINDOW.
MIGUEL! YOU'RE MAKING A BIG MISTAKE!
SOMEONE LIKE YOU SHOULD BE ATTRACTED TO A WOMAN FOR HER MIND!
CAN DAAAA-NUH DO CALCULATIONS TO THE 20TH DECIMAL POINT IN A MILLISECOND?
CAN DAAAA-NUH TELL YOU THE TEMPERATURE IN BOMBAY? CAN SHE? HUH?
THERE'S A HORRIBLE MAN IN BLACK! AND HE WENT THROUGH THERE!
OKAY, LYLA?
GOOD GIRL!

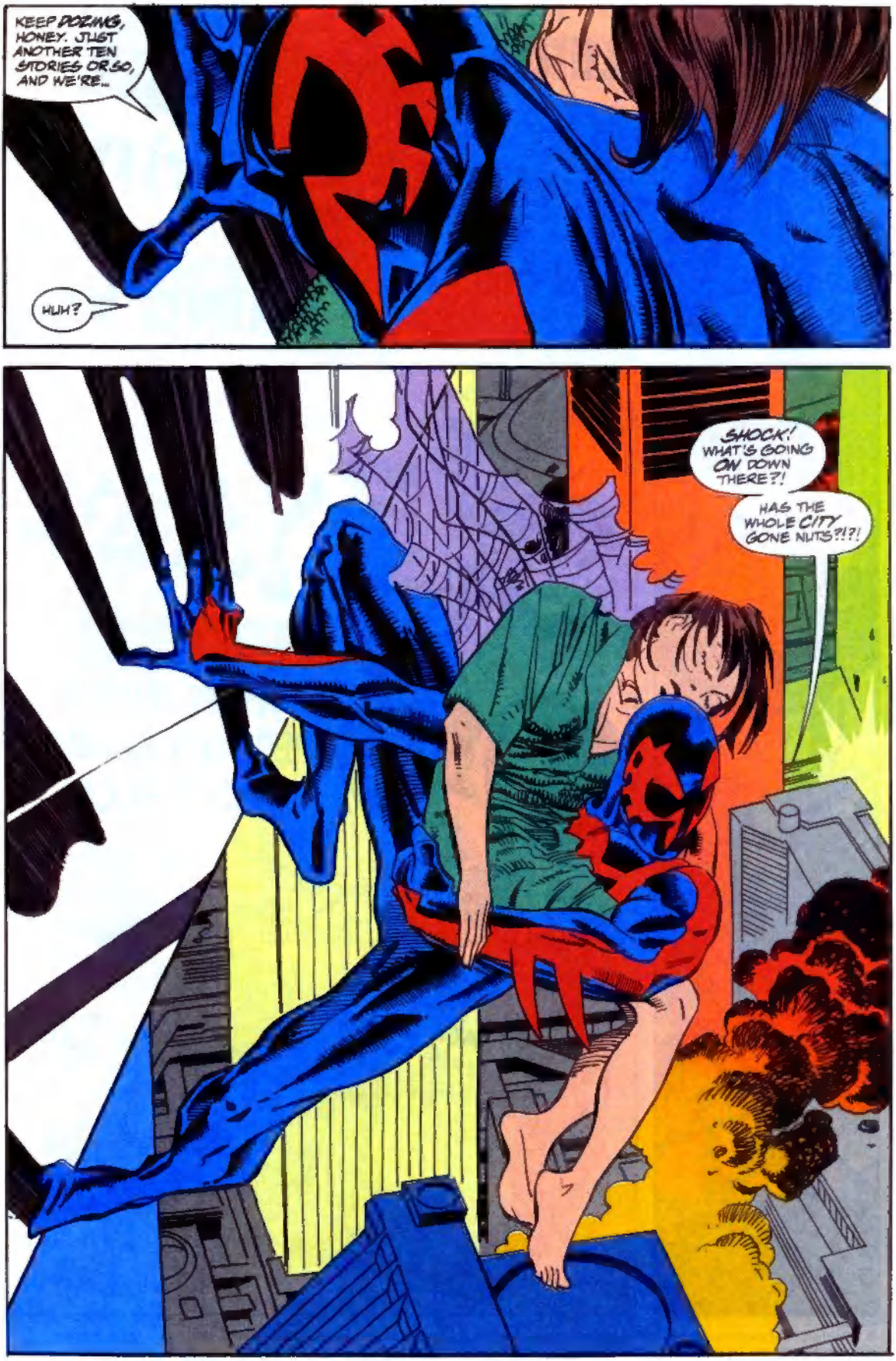
"FULLY AUTOMATED APARTMENT, SIR."
"FULLY ADAPTABLE COMPUTER PROGRAM, WITH READY HOOK-UP FOR HOLOAGENT MANAGEMENT, SIR."
"ALL THE MODERN CONVENIENCES, SIR. NEVER HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT A THING, SIR."
GEEZ.

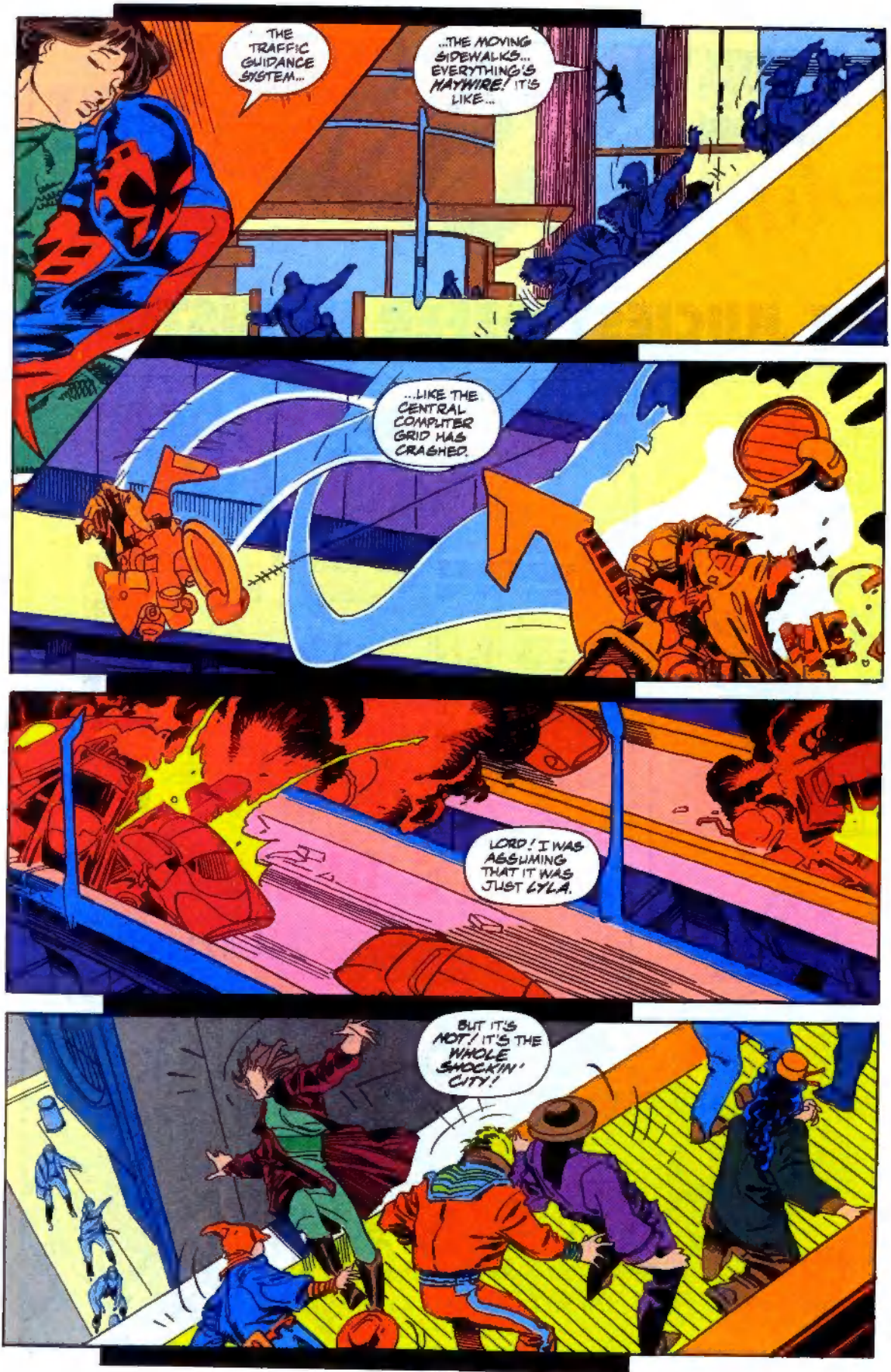

;MUUUNHHH...;
UH OH.


;Oooohhh;
RIGHT BABY.
JUST A BAD DREAM.

HANG ON, LOVER. ONCE WE HIT THE STREET...
SORRY. ONCE WE GET DOWN TO THE STREET...
...EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE.
COULD'VE BEEN WORSE. MA COULD HAVE INSISTED ON STAYING WITH ME INSTEAD OF GOING HOME WITH GABRI.

GABRIEL? GABRI?
HONEY, WHERE DO YOU KEEP THE...
...THE...
AW NO.
GABRI! NOT THAT STUFF AGAIN! NOT AFTER ALL THIS TIME!
GET IT OFF, HONEY! RIGHT NOW!
GET IT--!
EEARRHH!


KEEP DOZING, HONEY. JUST ANOTHER TEN STORIES OR SO, AND WE'RE...
HUH?
SHOCK! WHAT'S GOING ON DOWN THERE?!
HAS THE WHOLE CITY GONE NUTS?!?!


THE TRAFFIC GUIDANCE SYSTEM...
...THE MOVING SIDEWALKS... EVERYTHING'S HAYWIRE! IT'S LIKE...
...LIKE THE CENTRAL COMPUTER GRID HAS CRASHED.
LORD! I WAS ASSUMING THAT IT WAS JUST LYLA.
BUT IT'S NOT! IT'S THE WHOLE SHOCKIN' CITY!

AAAHH!
GOT'CHA!
YOU OKAY?
WHATTAYOU THINK?!?
SORRY. STUPID QUESTION.
ATTENTION SHOPPERS...
PLEASE BEAR WITH US. WE ARE EXPERIENCING SOME MINOR COMPUTER DIFFICULTIES.
MINOR?!?
WHAT'S MAJOR THEN? WORLD WAR IV!?

EVERYTHING WILL BE REPAIRED MOMENTARILY...
ACTUALLY, SHOPPERS... EVERYTHING IS NOT GOING TO BE REPAIRED MOMENTARILY.
EVERYTHING IS IN FACT, GOING TO HELL.
AND WE'RE ALL ALONG FOR THE RIDE.
WE NOW RETURN YOU TO YOUR REGULAR STATE OF SELF-DELUSION. THANK YOU.
ATTENTION, SHOPPERS. PLEASE BEAR WITH US.
WE ARE EXPERIENCING SOME MINOR COMPUTER DIFFICULTIES.

THERE IS DEFINITELY AN INTRODUCTION OF A VIRUS INTO HIS CYBORG NEURAL NET.
IMPOSSIBLE! HE'S BUG PROOF!
NOTHING IS IF THE PROGRAMMER'S SMART ENOUGH.
WILL YOU ALL PLEASE SHUT UP!
TEN REPORTS ABOUT CHAOS, ALL AT THE SAME TIME, JUST MAKES MORE CHAOS!
MENDEZ! WHAT HAS YOUR INVESTIGATION OF WINSTON TURNED UP?
BASICALLY, THE VIRUS IS SEIZING PROGRAMS AND MAKING THEM ACT OPPOSITE OF THEIR CORE PROGRAMMING.
WHY DIDN'T WE CATCH IT SOONER?
IT STARTED SMALL... WEEKS OF PEOPLE REPORTING GLITCHES AND SUCH.. BUT NOW IT ERUPTED.
HOW [redacted] WE GET IT UNDER CONTROL?!
AND WHO'S THE NUT WHO USURPED OUR ANNOUNCE-MENT BOARD?!
WE'RE NOT SURE, BUT [redacted] THINK... IT MIGHT BE...
...DISCORD.
WE'RE DEAD.

WHY HAVE WE STOPPED, DRIVER? WHAT'S HAPPENING?
THERE IS DIFFICULTY WITH THE CENTRAL TRAFFIC CONTROL SYSTEM, HIKARU-SAMA.
OF WHAT INTEREST IS THAT TO ME?
THE HEAD OF STARK-FUJIKAWA SHOULD NOT BE BOTHERED WITH TRAFFIC MISHAPS. SWITCH TO MANUAL AND LET US PROCEED.
I AM TRYING, SIR. THERE IS NO RESPONSE.
GET ME TYLER STONE ON VID IMMEDIATELY. WHAT SORT OF SYSTEM IS THIS WHERE...
HIKARU-SAMA!
HMM. YES, I SEE IT.
DRIVER... NOW WOULD BE AN EXCELLENT TIME TO UNLOCK THE DOORS.
THEY'RE COMPUTER LOCKED, SIR!
HOW UNFORTUNATE.

MOVE! HURRY! NOW!
I SAID NOW!!
BLAM-KOWWW

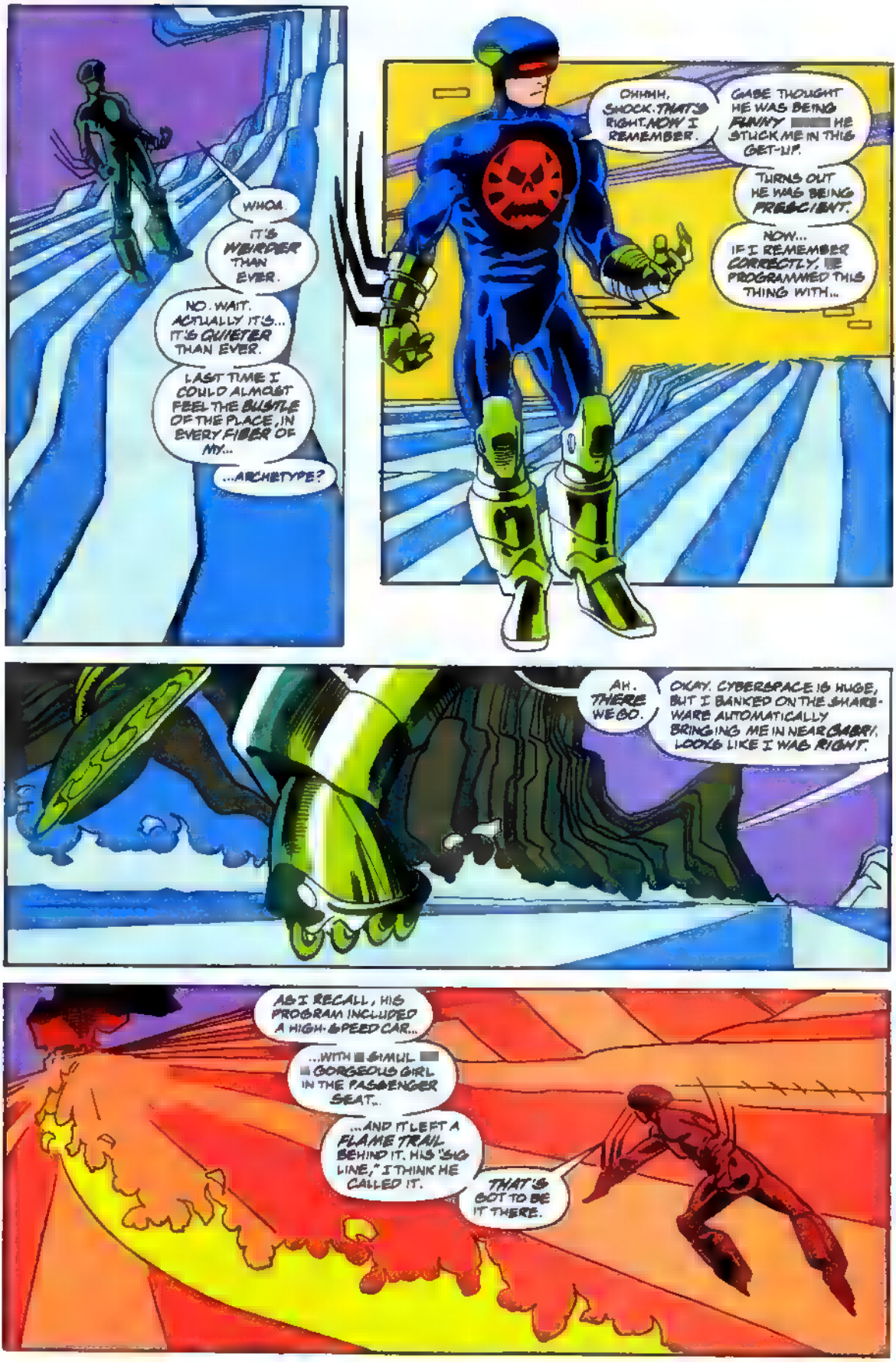
SORRY ABOUT YOUR CAR. I DIDN'T WANT TO WASTE TIME FIGHTING THE MAGLEV PULL. YOU GUYS OKAY?
UHM... YES.
GOOD. NOW I SEE SOME OTHER PROBLEMS, SO IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...

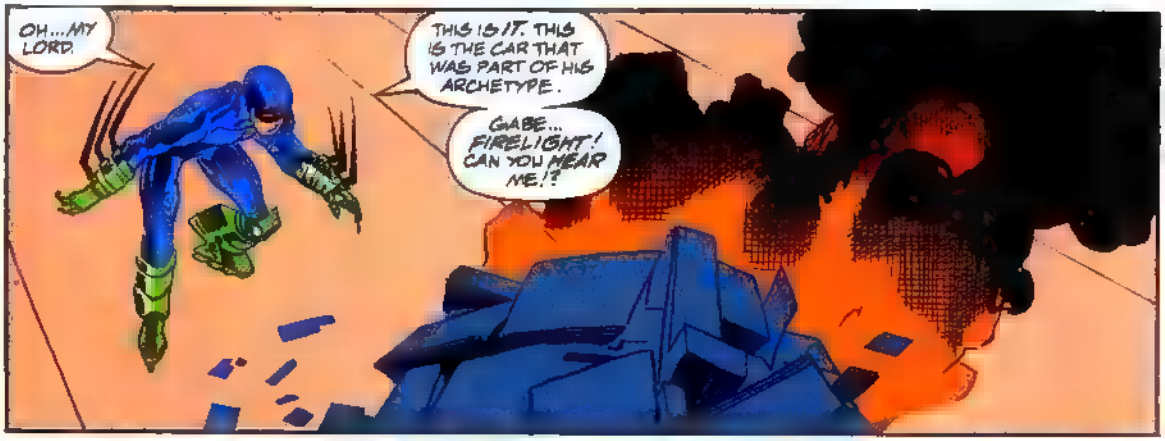
HUNH.
NOW THIS IS CURIOUS.
STARK-FUJIKAWA IS ENGAGED IN A BLOOD FEUD WITH A MAN WHO JUST SAVED MY LIFE. IT SEEMS I AM CURSED TO LIVE IN INTERESTING TIMES.

METEX
MIGUELLLL!!!
MIGUEL!! WHAT AM I DOING IN HERE?! WHAT--?!
HI, ARE YOU THE LADY OF THE HOUSE?
MIGUEL, WHAT'S HAPPENING?
GET DRESSED. I'LL EXPLAIN ON THE WAY.
THE LAST THING I REMEMBER I... HEY. WHAT'S THIS WHITE THREADY GUNK ON MY CLOTHES?
UH... EXTINGUISHER RESIDUE. WE HAD A FIRE. THAT'S WHY I HAD TO GET YOU OUT QUICK.
A FIRE? MIGUEL, ARE YOU OKAY?
HONEY, TODAY... NOBODY'S OKAY.
NEW YORK IS CROSSWIRED. IT'S THE BIGGEST DISASTER SINCE... EVER, I THINK.
WE... WE SHOULD GET OVER TO ALCHEMAX... SEE IF THEY KNOW.
GABRI'S PLACE IS CLOSER. AND, AS MUCH AS I HATE TO BRING IT UP, NO ONE KNOWS COMPUTERS LIKE ME DOES. COME ON.

REMEMBER WHEN WE FIRST MET, MIGUEL? RIGHT HERE, AT GABE'S PLACE.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE SO OBNOXIOUS...
...AND SELF-CENTERED AND EGOTISTICAL, AND...
PLEASE, STOP. YOU'LL MAKE MY HEAD SWELL.
GABE! GABRI, OPEN UP! IT'S ME!
YOUR BROTHER, THE OBNOXIOUS, SELF-CENTERED EGOMANIAC...
I DIDN'T SAY YOU WERE AN EGOMANIAC.
...WHO EXAGGERATES.
MRS. O'HARA! YOUR...YOUR HAIR...
THAT'S A NEW LOOK FOR YOU, ISN'T IT, MA?
Gabriel!... he...
...in the bedroom... help him, Miguel...
UHHHH BOY.
HE'S BREATHING. REAL SLOW, BUT HE'S STILL THERE.
HE MUST HAVE BEEN PLUGGED INTO THE NET WHEN THE SYSTEM DISRUPTED
CAN'T YOU JUST UNPLUG HIM? YANK THE LEADS OUT?
WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT HAPPENED TO HIS ARCHETYPE?
NOT A GOOD IDEA.
HIS... HIS WHAT?
OH LORD, THIS IS TECH STUFF AGAIN, ISN'T IT?

AN ARCHETYPE, MA. A COMPUTER GENERATED "MESSENGER" FOR TRAVELING THE COMMUNAL LINK NETWAY CALLED CYBERSPACE.
IT'S LIKE HOW A VIDPHONE PROJECTS YOUR IMAGE... BUT MORE INTENSE.
THAT'S A CO-LINK, ISN'T IT? "SHAREWARE!"
YEAH. YEARS AGO, WHEN GABE WAS HOOKED ON THIS STUFF HARD, HE BEGGED ME TO TRY IT WITH HIM. I WENT ALONG WITH IT.
WE PLUGGED IN NOON SATURDAY. WHEN WE CAME OUT, IT WAS SUNDAY NIGHT.
GABRI WAS LIKE ANOTHER PERSON WHEN HE PLUGGED IN. IN FACT, [redacted] WAS ANOTHER PERSON.
WENT BY THE NAME "FIRELIGHT", I THINK.
GOOD THING HE STILL HAS ALL THE EQUIPMENT.
WHAT'S THAT LITTLE THING?
MY ARCHETYPE PROGRAM. GABRI MADE IT FOR ME AT THE TIME.
I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE.
WON'T IT LOOK LIKE YOU?
NOT NECESSARILY. ARCHETYPES CAN LOOK LIKE ANYTHING, DEPENDING WHAT THE PROGRAMMER WHIPPED UP.
OKAY. WISH ME LUCK.
BE CAREFUL, MIGUEL!
LITTLE LATE FOR THAT, BABE.

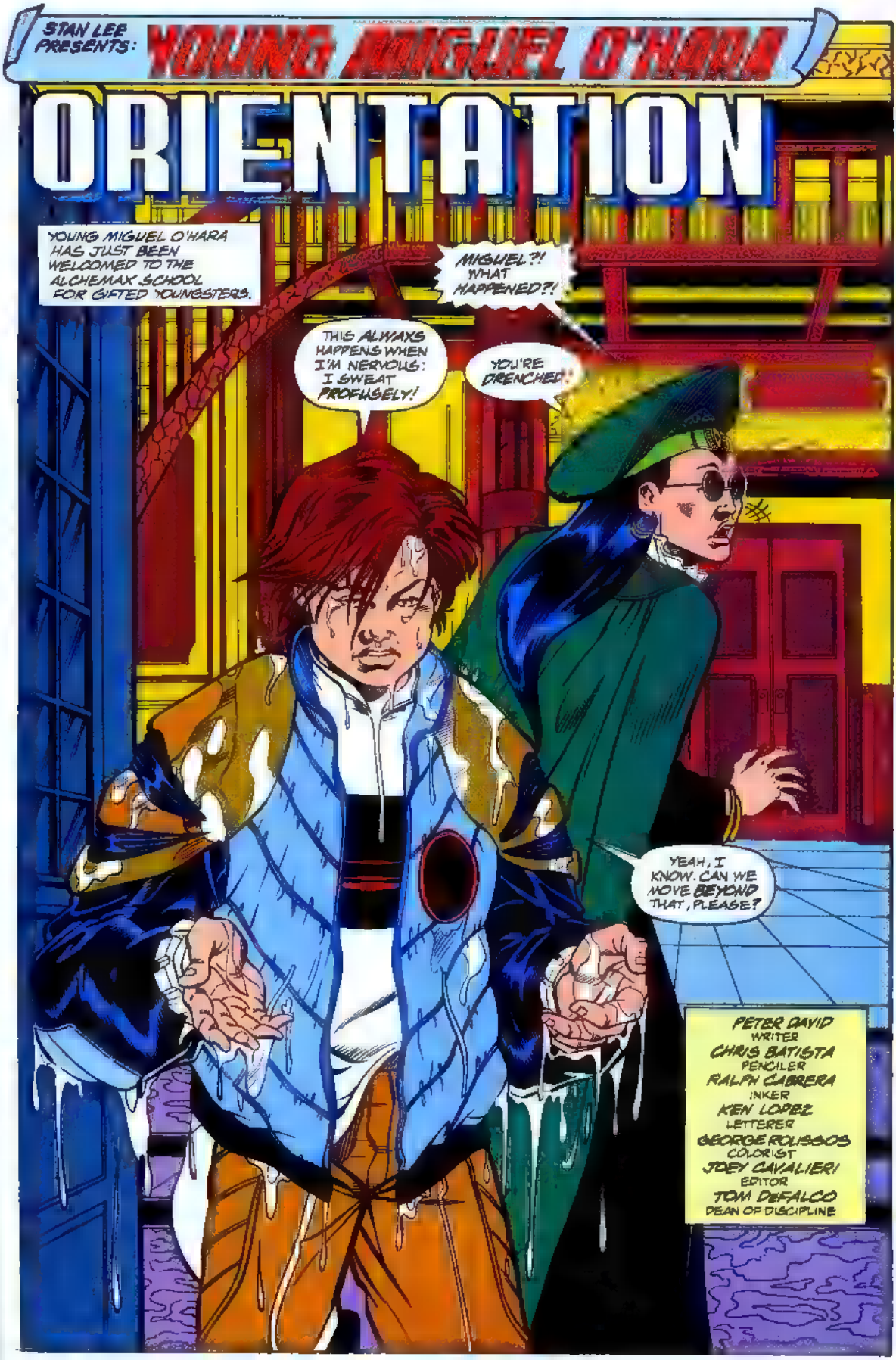

WHOA.
IT'S WEIRDER THAN EVER.
NO. WAIT. ACTUALLY IT'S... IT'S QUIETER THAN EVER.
LAST TIME I COULD ALMOST FEEL THE BUSTLE OF THE PLACE, IN EVERY FIBER OF MY...
...ARCHETYPE?
OHHHH. SHOCK. THAT'S RIGHT. NOW I REMEMBER.
GABE THOUGHT HE WAS BEING FUNNY [redacted] HE STUCK ME IN THIS GET-UP.
TURNS OUT HE WAS BEING PRESCIENT.
NOW... IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY, [redacted] PROGRAMMED THIS THING WITH...
AH. THERE WE GO.
OKAY. CYBERSPACE IS HUGE, BUT I BANKED ON THE SHAREWARE AUTOMATICALLY BRINGING ME IN NEAR GABE'S. LOOKS LIKE I WAS RIGHT.
AS I RECALL, HIS PROGRAM INCLUDED A HIGH-SPEED CAR...
...WITH [redacted] SIMUL [redacted] GORGEOUS GIRL IN THE PASSENGER SEAT...
...AND IT LEFT A FLAME TRAIL BEHIND IT. HIS "SIG LINE," I THINK HE CALLED IT.
THAT'S GOT TO BE IT THERE.



SO YOU'RE A FRIEND OF FIRELIGHT'S, HUH?
AS YOU CAN SEE, HE'S OUT OF HIS MIND RIGHT NOW.
AN EXTREME CASE OF GARBAGE IN, GARBAGE OUT.
HELLO. I'M DISCORD.
FEEL FREE TO ENJOY CYBERSPACE FOR THE REMAINING TWENTY TWO MINUTES THAT IT, AND YOU... AND CIVILIZATION AS WE KNOW IT... HAVE TO EXIST. AH, I LOVE MELODRAMA, DON'T YOU?

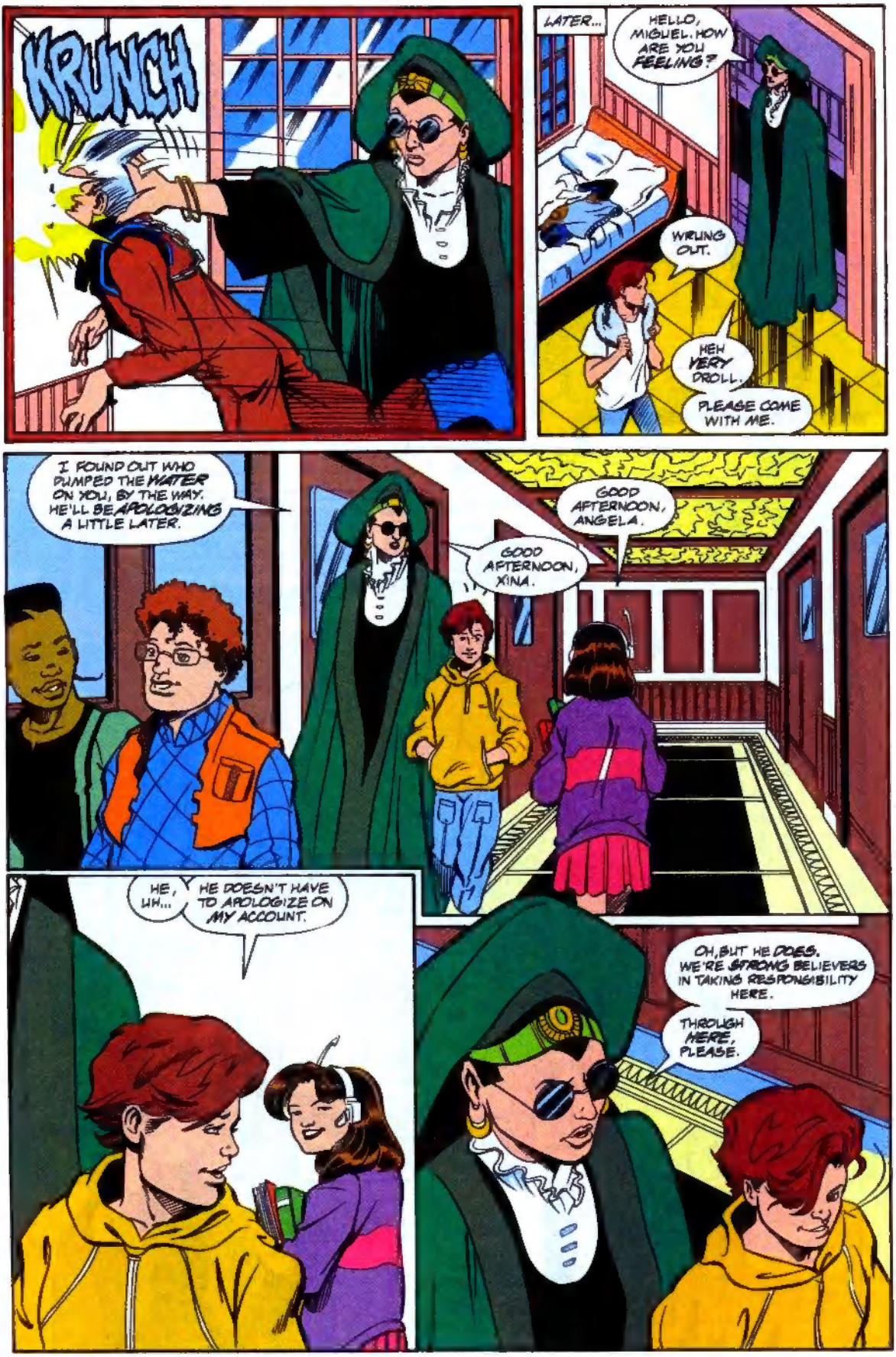
NEXT:

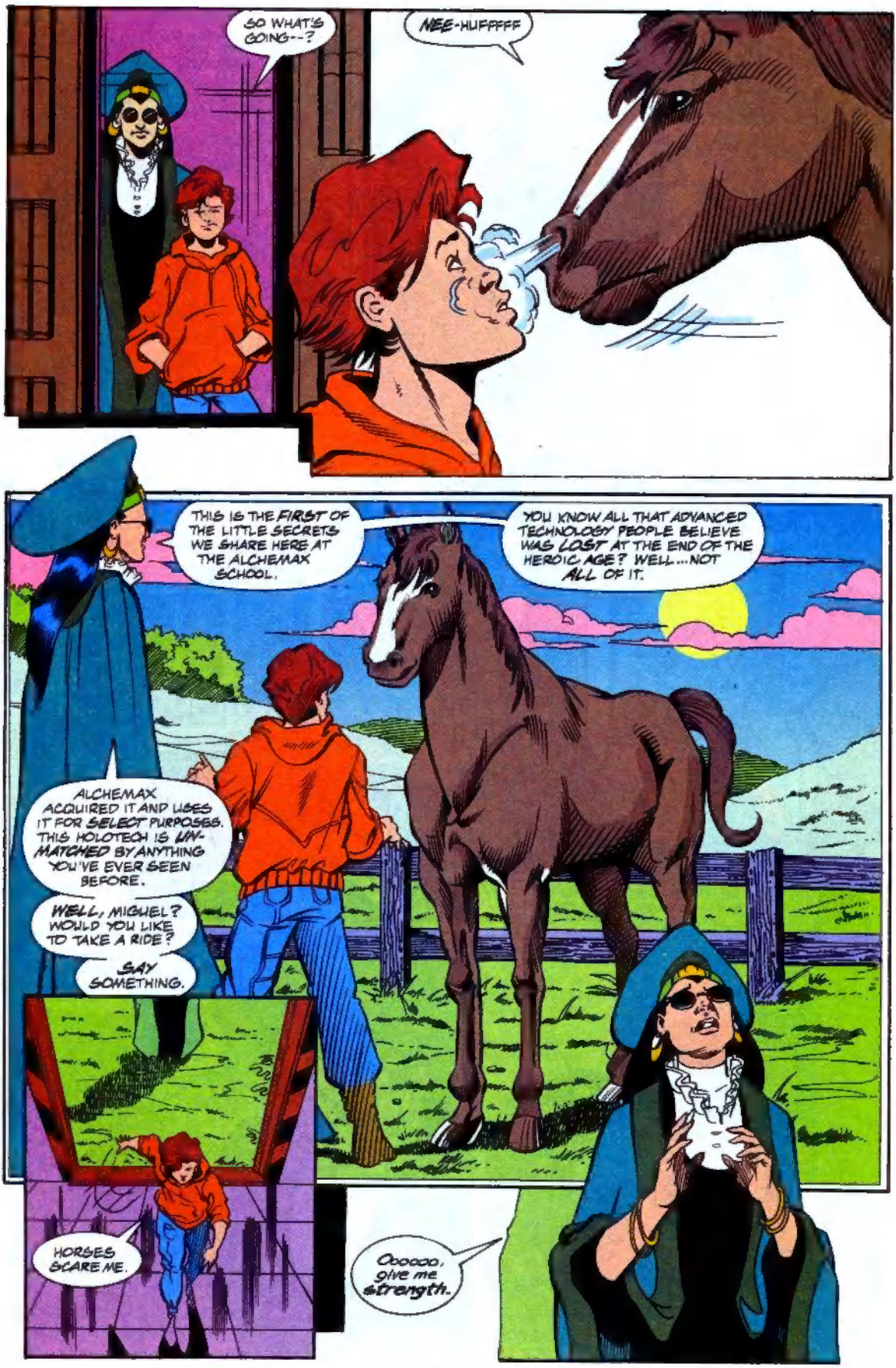
CRASH AND BURN


STAN LEE PRESENTS: YOUNG MIGUEL O'HARA
ORIENTATION
YOUNG MIGUEL O'HARA HAS JUST BEEN WELCOMED TO THE ALCHEMAX SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS.
MIGUEL?! WHAT HAPPENED?!
THIS ALWAYS HAPPENS WHEN I'M NERVOUS: I SWEAT PROFUSELY!
YOU'RE DRENCHED!
YEAH, I KNOW. CAN WE MOVE BEYOND THAT, PLEASE?
PETER DAVID WRITER
CHRIS BATISTA PENCILER
RALPH CABRERA INKER
KEN LOPEZ LETTERER
GEORGE ROUSSOS COLORIST
JOEY CAVALIERI EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO DEAN OF DISCIPLINE

JENKINS! TOWELS! AT ONCE!
WHO DID THIS TO YOU?
I DIDN'T CATCH HIS NAME. THERE WAS A CASCADE FROM OVERHEAD, I LOOKED UP, AND SAW A WINDOW SLAM.
SO THERE WASN'T A LOT OF TIME FOR SOCIAL INTERCOURSE.
THIS ISN'T THE KIND OF INTRODUCTION I WANTED YOU TO HAVE TO OUR SCHOOL.
WHY, WHAT DO YOU USUALLY DO? SET NEW STUDENTS ON FIRE?
LOOK, I KNOW YOU'RE UPSET AND CRANKY...
YEAH, WELL, I USUALLY GET THIS WAY WHEN MY UNDERWEAR IS CLAMMY.
PLUS I'VE BEEN YANKED AWAY FROM MY FAMILY, SO IT'S BEEN A PRETTY FULL DAY.
THINGS WILL GET BETTER. I PROMISE.
GOOD. BECAUSE IF THIS WAS THE HIGH POINT, I'LL JUST BLOW MY BRAINS OUT NOW AND SAVE US ALL SOME TIME.
MIGUEL... LOGISTICS OF CARE AND FEEDING ASIDE... YOU KNOW AFTER THE ANIMAL EPIDEMIC OF '32, HORSES ARE FAIRLY HARD TO COME BY.
YOU ASKED. I ANSWERED. CAN I CHANGE NOW?
SURE.
AS YOU SEE, WE'VE KEPT YOUR ROOM SIMPLE SO YOU CAN FEEL FREE TO EXPRESS YOURSELF.
REMEMBER, CALL ME ANGELA. AND IF THERE'S ANYTHING YOU WANT, I'LL GET IF FOR YOU.
A PONY.
A WHAT?
YOU HEARD ME.

KRON, OPEN UP.
NOW.
KRON, YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE POURED WATER ON MIGUEL.
IS THAT THE NEW KID'S NAME? SOUNDS WIMPY.
I WISH YOU WEREN'T DISTURBING ME, ANGIE. YOU KNOW HOW HARD I'M TRYING TO STUDY THESE DAYS.
SO YOU ADMIT YOU DOUSED HIM.
I'M NOT ADMITTING ANYTHING.
SO DO I.
I WANT YOU TO GO AND APOLOGIZE TO HIM.
FERGIT IT. NOW GET OUTTA HERE.
I MEAN IT.
AHHHHHH!!!
YOU BI--!
LANGUAGE, PLEASE.
KRON STONE, YOU'RE ABOUT TO HAVE A LEARNING EXPERIENCE.


KRUNCH
LATER...
HELLO, MIGUEL. HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
WRUNG OUT.
MEH VERY DROLL.
PLEASE COME WITH ME.
I FOUND OUT WHO PUMPED THE WATER ON YOU, BY THE WAY. HE'LL BE APOLOGIZING A LITTLE LATER.
GOOD AFTERNOON, ANGELA.
GOOD AFTERNOON, XINA.
HE, UH...
HE DOESN'T HAVE TO APOLOGIZE ON MY ACCOUNT.
OH, BUT HE DOES. WE'RE STRONG BELIEVERS IN TAKING RESPONSIBILITY HERE.
THROUGH HERE, PLEASE.


SO WHAT'S GOING--?
NEE-HUFFFFF
THIS IS THE FIRST OF THE LITTLE SECRETS WE SHARE HERE AT THE ALCHEMAX SCHOOL.
YOU KNOW ALL THAT ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY PEOPLE BELIEVE WAS LOST AT THE END OF THE HEROIC AGE? WELL...NOT ALL OF IT.
ALCHEMAX ACQUIRED IT AND USES IT FOR SELECT PURPOSES. THIS HOLOTECH IS UNMATCHED BY ANYTHING YOU'VE EVER SEEN BEFORE.
WELL, MIGUEL? WOULD YOU LIKE TO TAKE A RIDE?
SAY SOMETHING.
HORSES SCARE ME.
Ooooo, give me strength.